

A few days later, on May 12, Lord Halifax journeyed to Geneva and invited the Council of the League to declare that the recognition of the conquest of Abyssinia should be decided by each state for itself. The Government, he explained, had not modified its views of Italy's action, but it was forced to accept the facts. Many states had already taken the step, and nobody suggested that independence could be restored. "When, as here, two ideals are in conflict—one the ideal of devotion, unflinching but unpractical, to some high purpose; on the other, the ideal of a practical victory for peace—I cannot doubt that the stronger claim is that of peace." This declaration, which was painful for such a high-minded moralist and such a champion of the League to make, did not constitute recognition, but it indicated that the time was not far off.

The September crisis, which brought us to the verge of war with Germany, fortified the Prime Minister's resolve to keep on good terms with Rome. On November 2 he moved that the treaty should come into force, since the Spanish Government had decided to disband the International Brigade and Italy withdrew 10,000 soldiers. Mussolini promised to withdraw the rest when the non-intervention plan became operative, and to send no more troops nor air forces to replace them. These assurances, added to the withdrawal of 10,000 men, proved his good intentions. Hitler and Mussolini informed him at Munich that they had no territorial ambitions in Spain. "The Spanish question is no longer a menace to the peace of Europe." Mussolini, he added, had helped to keep the peace. "I could not have appealed to him unless our relations had been changed." This optimism was challenged by Mr. Eden, who reiterated his

conviction that it was impossible to make a satisfactory agreement with Italy while she was breaking her word in Spain. She had continued intervention on a large scale after signing the treaty, and no settlement was in sight. The Prime Minister had waived his condition and recognized the conquest of Abyssinia without Italy paying the price. Our policy of appeasement had not been reciprocated.

Chamberlain and Lord Halifax visited Rome in January 1939, at the invitation of the Duce. "The impressions which remain uppermost in my mind," declared the Foreign Secretary, "are the cordiality with which we were received by Signor Mussolini and the Italian Government; the absolutely spontaneous